

T H E
L I F E
O F
Tho. Neaves,
THE NOTED
STREET-ROBBER,

Executed at TYBURN, on Friday the
seventh of February, 1728-9. for Shop-lifting.
Captain of the Gang of STREET-ROBBERS,
executed at Tyburn in May last.

A very MACKHEATH, and Political
Plunderer; His private Villanies, publick Vices
and Intrigues, with some Sodomitical Professors.
The Canting Language in Perfection; and the
Art of Sharping, Tricking, Biting and Filching,
shew'd, as practis'd with the utmost Dexterity,
both in the City, and at —

*When you censure the Age,
Be cautious and sage;
Lest the Courtiers offended should be,
If you mention Vice, or Bribe,
'Tis so pat to all the Tribe,
Each cries, that was level'd at me. B. O.*

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T H E
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O F

Thomas Neaves.



I is not certainly so much the want of Good, as the excess of Evil; that makes a Man prone to Lewdness, Immorality and Inordinate Vice; there are generous Sparks enough in the Soul to prompt us on to laudable Actions, and to endeavour to pursue the rugged Paths of Virtue, were they not too frequently quench'd by the putrid Fogs of Corruption, and the temptations of a profuse, lazy Life. As India Vines from purer Rays remov'd, transplant-ed here in a far colder Climate, have, for the Generality, prov'd unfruitful, because they want that natural

A 2. Warmth,

Warmth, that was us'd to supply the necessities of Nature. So Mankind, in the pursuit of moral Virtue, is drawn aside by the pleasing Prospect of a competent Maintenance, without the surprizing Fateigues of working hard for an honest Livelihood. The Frailties of the Body, the current of the World, the want of a liberal Education, and the defects of the Mind are continually working in Opposition to Moral Virtue, and checking those Motions she is pregnant with. When we run abruptly into new Crimes with Impunity, we flatter ourselves with future Successes answerable to our purpos'd Designs: Yet when seriously consider of the necessary Punishment due to our Crimes, we cannot but reflect with horror on that desperate course of Life wherein we are engag'd, as if our Conscience had still so much Justice left, that it could not forbear to pronounce that just Sentence in its rational Enquiry, and its innate apprehension which the Merit of our unpremeditated and illegal Actions requir'd; for all ill Actions run against the grain of the undefil'd Soul, and even whilst we are committing them, our Hearts chide and condemn both our Hands and our Tongues for transgressing. There are few that are bad at first meerly out of their love to Vice, because there is a nobleness in the mind of Man, which of itself intitles it to the abhorrence of what is Ill. Who is there so harden'd in Iniquity, and so abandon'd a Wretch, as to have an Inclination for Vice because it is Vice? He must be lost both as to his

Natural



Natural Sense and his Understanding, that adapts himself to all manner of Wickedness, for any other cause than the seeming Good it carries with it; even the first primitive Sin which our first Parents committed, tho' it were (as St. Augustine says) originally from the Soul, yet it proceeded not out of a wilful intention to Sin, but out of a respect to a seeming Good, that was look'd for by it. When we thirst after Pleasure we are call'd as Beasts with Fodder to the Slaughterhouse, or as Boys catch Horses with Provender in their Hands to ride them. Ill Actions are perpetual Perturbations, the Punishment is far more grievous than the performance was delightful, and the Guilt is worse than the Punishment.

There was a Pythagorean that bought a pair of Shoes upon trust, the Shoemaker dies, the Philosopher is glad, and thinks he had them on free Cost, but some time after his Conscience twitches him and haunts him to that degree, that he was oblig'd to repair to the House of the deceas'd, and casts in his Money with these Words; There take thy due, thou livest to me, tho' dead to all beside.

An idle Man is the barrenest Piece of Earth in the Terrestrial Globe, for there is no Creature in the Universe that hath Life but what is busied in some Action or another for its benefit and support. 'Tis Action that keeps the Body both sweet and sound, whilst lying still soddens and disorders the whole frame. St. Augustine
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imputes the loss of Esau's Blessing to his slothfulness, that had rather receive Meat than seek it. It was a remarkable saying of the far-fam'd Scipio, to the Senate of Rome, We are now most in danger, for whilst we have no Enemy to over-awe and call us out to Arms, we grow Effeminate, and give ourselves wholly to Intemperance, Luxury and Immorality. And when Cleanthes had labour'd hard for sometime, and had got some Money by the sweat of his Brows, beforehand, he crys out to his Companions ; Behold the Fruits of my Labour, I can now, if I will, nourish another Cleanthes : How uncomfortable must a Man's Life be, (that not having the fear of God before his Eyes, intirely gives himself up to all manner of Wickedness) that continually preys on the Goods and Property of his Neighbour without any legal Authority for so doing ; he can never have any peace, or quietness within himself, every Tree, every Shrub, he thinks the hand of Justice in the pursuit of his Iniquity ; there is not a Voice that he hears, but he misconstrues ; Stop Thief, and fancies himself lost and o'ertaken ; his Life is one continued series of Terror, Misery and Confusion ; and when he is once call'd down to the Bar to receive his Sentence, and thereby doom'd to a scandalous and ignominious Death to be hang'd by the Neck like a Dog till he is dead ; then he repents when too late, that he did not employ his Thoughts, and his Hours in a more salutary employment, to get an honest and competent Livelihood,
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without running the risques too frequently Incident to their hazardous and desperate Undertakings. And if by Povyng, which by the Prigish obscure Language, or Dialect, is understood an Evidence, they evade the Censure of the Law, by bringing to condign Punishment and convicting Capitally two, or more of the Fraternity, their Companions in Iniquity, yet they can never take any warning from the Indulgence of that Clause in the Law, which secures them their Possessions, their Liberty and their Lives; but oh! fatal necessity, they must return again (like Dogs to their Vomit) to commit those enormities that must certainly one Time, or other bring them under the Hands of the Executioner to become a publick Example, to a crowded Multitude, and a lamentable Spectacle to their disconsolate Friends and Relations.

I confess it is a Melancholly Sight to see unhappy Wretches drag'd to publick Execution in the Prime of their Days and in full strength and vigour of their Youth, when they might have others been (if they had not taken such wicked and profligate Courses) a Joy to their Friends, a Comfort to their Parents, and a publick Utility to the whole Community, and have Spun out their Days to a longer Period of Time. Could they propose any other Advantage then a sensual Gratification of unlawful Passions, there might be some Excuse pleaded in their behalf: Certainly Mankind is govern'd by an all-ruling Providence, Decrees are past upon us in
Heaven

Heaven: It is Fate that hurrys a Man to his End beyond his own Intention; what we suspect and would avoid we cannot; what we suspect not we fall into. We use often Means of Preservation, which often prove our Destruction. Man is meerly the Tennis-Ball of Fortune, he is sometimes rais'd from the Plough to a Throne, and sometimes again is taken from that to a Halter. In vain we Murmur at the Things that must be, in vain we Mourn for what we cannot remedy. St. Jerom says, that providentia des omnia Gubernantur, & quæ putatur pæna, Medicina est, which is that all Things are govern'd by Providence, and what is thought a Pain is a remedy. In all our Actions our hope is our Comfort, yet human Life has not a greater Enemy than hope; it is to Man as a Bladder is to a learning Swimmer, it keeps him from sinking to the bosom of the Waves, but it makes him many Times venture beyond his Strentb, where by some unforeseen Accident he Perishes without Redemption. So when a Man comes of with Success in his first Attempt, the hope that he shall always succeed, emboldens him to pursue his unlawful Undertaking, till he is tak'n and Imprison'd in his full Career, yet does not the severity of a Keepers discipline, the heavy weight of Manacles and Fetters, and the starving Condition of a Goal deter him, in the least from his Evil and enormous Practices.

There

There is certainly a difference in the Mould, and in the Stamp of these unfortunate Adventurers, their Clay is temper'd beyond the common acceptation of honest Men, they give themselves up intirely to all manner of Debauchery, excessive Whoring and Drinking, an inordinate and unsettled way of Living; they hazard their Lives to support their Extravagance, and what they Pilfer, Steal, Rob and Plunder from one Part of the World, they squander and generously bestow on the other, viz. the Debauch'd, the Stews, and the Gaming-Houses. So that whenever it happens, their ill Fate to be bon'd (that is taken into Custody) they are not one Penny beyond a Beggar; but should Providence order it so that upon biting a considerable Blow, (that is a good round Sum,) they are pursued and taken, the Goal-er comes in for a benefit Ticket; there is first a demand for taking of the heavy and putting on light Irons, so much for the Master-side, the Indulgence and Countenance of the Keeper, and other exorbitant Demands and Extortions, till they drain their Pockets, and leave them (before they go to their Tryal at the Old-Bailly,) as clean as are a Gallow Bird in the Nest. I hope the Readers will not think this Introduction too prolix, seeing from the foregoing Premisses we may draw this necessary Inference, that the whole is a Type of the Life and Actions of the unfortunate Thomas Neaves, that

now lies under Sentence of Condemnation, in one of the Cells in Newgate, that the Sentences are both Moral and Divine, and are only as a Prologue to the following Narrative, which is not Fabulous but Genuine; not couch'd in ambiguous and untelligable Terms, but adapted to the Understanding of the meanest Capacity.

Thomas Neaves, 28 Years of Age, the Son of Thomas Neaves, was born in the Parish of St. Sepulchres; his Father was a Butcher by Trade, and with his Wife kept a Stand in Newgate Market, but for the generality sold only Veal, his Trade falling off, his Children being very expensive to him, he remov'd to the Parish of Clarkenwell near Tunball Street, where he continued some time, his Wife hawking Meat about the Streets, and behaving himself soberly and honestly, some of the Heads of the Parish took such a likeing to the good-natur'd Man, that they put his Son this same Thomas Neaves that lyes under Sentence of Condemnation, to a Free-School, where he had a good liberal Education, and having run thro' the inferior Classes of the School, his Father (considering his Inability to support him thro' the whole course of his Learning,) took him from the Charity-School, and bound him Apprentice to one Mr. Lean a Butcher,

Butcher, the Corner Shop, the Front leading into *Red-Lyon-Street*, and the Back-Door opening into *Gray's-Inn Passage*, where he continued and behav'd himself honestly for Four, or Five Years, but falling into loose Company he run away from his Master. He is remarkable in this, that during his Apprenticeship he would have tak'n away the Life of one *Andrew Jones*, having Sworn falsly that *Andrew Jones* had broke open his Master's Shop, but his Evidence not being credited *Jones* was acquitted by the Jury. After he run away from his Master, he hir'd himself to a Post-Master, but that Station not agreeing with his fickle and roving Inclination, he left his second Master; and it being his unhappy Fate that he had not perfectly learnt his Trade, he got into the Company of loose idle disorderly Persons, and fatally link'd himself into their Gang; he often frequented *Lincoln-Inn-Fields*, *Moor-Fields*, and other Places where those sort of Cattle us'd to resort; at first he began to Play at small Game, viz. to go a Clouting (that is picking Handkerchiefs out of Men's Pockets) going on the Sneak (that is entering into Houses when Time and Opportunity serv'd, and taking Things of inconsiderate Value,) sometimes early in the Morning he would resort to Publick Houses and call for Pint of a Drink,

but whilst they went into the Cellar to draw the Beer, he would step on his Tip Toes into the Inner Chambers, Back Rooms, or Kitchen, and generally took that care to get either Pewter Plates, Porrengers, Brass Candlesticks, or something else that more than doubly repaid the Expences he was at; being oblig'd to sell them at under Price to prevent discovery; he was generally Indigent and had hardly Cloaths to cover his Nakedness: He run on in this course of Life some considerable time before he was discover'd, till at length being apprehended for Felony he was committed to *Newgate*, and being convicted for Transportation at the Sessions-House in the *Old-Baily*, in the Year 1726. he was Transported soon after according to his Sentence to his Majesty's Plantations in *America*, where he continued not above 8 Months, but he bought a Brush as they term it, and work'd in a Merchant Ship without any Wages for his Passage Home, and in *August* 1727, return'd to *England*, where he continued not long before he fell to his old Trade of fingering what was not his own, as will farther and more amply appear by a genuine Narrative of the Robberies by him committed since his return, with this only difference, that whereas before his Transportation, he was only guilty of petty Larcenary and other
single

single Felonies that did not reach his Life, since his return he became a Proficient in the Art and Mystery of Priggysism, and was aiding and abetting to the most perpetrated Acts of Villany that human thoughts could suggest, or his unbounded Ambition, or Avarice could promote.

On the first of *December*, 1727. *Thomas Neaves*, *Richard Nichols*, and three others being out after their Prey, went to the Shop of one *Mr. Moran*, in order steal his Show-Glass, but a Barber being in his Shop over-against them, they thought the Enterprize too Dangerous without they could divert the Barber from looking that way, to effect which *Nichols* went over under the pretence of buying a Wig, and plac'd himself so conveniently that he prevented the Barber from discovering their design. In the mean time *Neaves* and the other three secur'd the Show-Glass and made off with it, in which was nine Silver Watches and one of Gold: Immediately after they had committed this Robbery they adjourn'd to the House of one *John Perkins* (who was since Transported) in *White-Horse-Alley* in *Chick-Lane*, and there after some debate it was resolv'd the Watches should be pawn'd, wherefore they deliver'd three of them to *Perkins's* Wife, who accordingly went out and pawn'd them at a Neighbouring-House which was us'd

to

to such Traffick, whilst her Huband took two others, and taking a different rout to prevent Accidents, pawn'd them, and return'd with the Money, which with the other remaining four Silver ones were divided betwixt *Nichols* and the other three at the said House. The Gold Watch falling to *Neaves's* share, he made a Tour to *Shrewsbury*, where he sold it for eight Pound, and return'd to *London* very soon after.

But their ill got Gains being soon wasted in riotous and debauch'd Company, for whilst they had affluence enough to support their Extravagance, they had no thoughts of seeking for more, to make a Provision against a rainy Day, till their Necessity oblig'd them to seek a fresh supply. Wherefore on the 5th of *January*, *Neaves* with one *John Hornby* and *Edward Benson* alias *Brown*, being severally Sworn to be true to each other, went out with a design to raise Contribution, and about twelve of the Clock at Night attack'd one Mr. *Ellis* in *St. Paul's-Church-Yard*, one of them seiz'd the Gentleman by the Throat, whilst the others trip'd up his Heels; when he was down they beat him most unmercifully, and took from a Silver Watch and two Guineas in Money, which *Neaves* confess'd on his Examination, when he made himself an Evidence, with this further

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Confirmation of their Guilt that *Hornby* would have taken the Ring off his Finger, but that he could not conveniently come at it because it was so tight on, being affraid (that as delays oftentimes prove dangerous) they might be surpriz'd and tak'n in the Fact, so they precipitately retir'd, sold the Watch to one *Madam Toy* who frequently us'd to buy their stolen Goods, and entertain'd them at her House, and then they divided the Spoil: About two Days afterwards *Benson* and *Hornby* went to *Norwich*, from whence they return'd very soon.

Thomas Neaves, *Edward Benson*, alias *Brown*, *George Gale*, alias *Kiddy George*, and *James Toon*, roving about the Streets in quest of their Prey, on the 3d of *April* last, got into *Crispin-street*, *Spittle-fields*, where upon consultation it was resolv'd to stop the first single Person that fell in their way, when meeting with one *Mr. Fleming*, immediately after, they attack'd him and took from him his Watch and two Guineas in Money, *Toon* held a Pistol to his Head, whilst the others rifled him; they faithfully divided the Money amongst them, but whereas *Toon* was but a *Tyro* that is a fresh Water Sailor, and a Novice in their Trade, they did not think it proper to let him into the Secret, and give him an equal dividend with them, it being a Custom amongst the
Priggs

Priggs when Opportunity serves to bite and cheat one another; therefore *Neaves*, *Gale* and *Benson* shar'd the Money amongst them, for the Watch which was pawn'd to that noted Lock, *Madam Toy's*.

Saturday the 2d of *March*, *Neaves*, *Gale*, alias *Kiddy George*, *Benson*, alias *Brown*, *Crowder* and *Toon*, being on the Scout, met a Gentleman in his Chair passing thro' *Leicester-Fields*, whom they attack'd and rob'd of a rich Diamond Ring, Money and Notes to the Value of 300 l. *Neaves* stop'd the Chair with a cock'd Pistol in his Hand, which is the first time that he was a principal Actor, whilst his Accomplices were only Tomys, that is plac'd at a certain distance, to give timely Notice if any Persons approach'd, whose Presence might prevent their perpetrating their design.

The *Wednesday* following *Neaves*, *Crowder* and *Gale*, alias *Kiddy George*, attack'd Mr. *Bruski* of *White-Horse-Alley*, *Moorfields*, between *Clare-Market* and the Theatre in *Lincoln-Inn-Fields*, *Crowder* pincon'd him, whilst *Neaves* and *Gale* rifled his Pockets of his Money and his Watch.

Flush'd with his Success in this Adventure, on the 10th of *April* following, the said *Neaves* associates himself with *Edward Benson*, alias *Brown*, *Thomas Gale*, alias *Kiddy George*, *Thomas Crowder*,
alias

alias Little Tom, with others, took a walk to *Hogsdon*, and having met a *French* Parson in the Way, they attack'd him and rob'd him of a considerable Sum of Money and other Things of value. The *Frenchman* being not a little surpriz'd at their Treatment, cry'd out in a melancholly Tone, *Here, take what I have, but for God's sake spare my Life*. He supposed them to be of the same barbarous Mould and Stamp with the *French* Collectors on the High-way, who seldom or never spare the Lives of those unhappy People that happen in their way either before or after they have rifled them.

On the same Night *Neaves*, in company with his Accomplices, a sufficient Number for a Mordeing Party, and well qualified for their Undertaking, attack'd one *James Colvart* in a Coach on the High-way, near the *Dog-House-Row* near *Bunhill-Fields*, and took from him and another Person a Silver Watch and 24 Shillings in Money. *Crowder* (who was order'd to stop the Coach) fir'd first at the Coachman before he bid him stand, for which preceptive Action he was upbraided by the others; then *Benson* and *Gale*, *alias Kiddy George*, step'd up, and opening the Doors rob'd the said Mr. *Colvart* and the other Person of the Watch and Money above-mention'd. They pawn'd the Watch to one Mr.

Bradford for two Guineas, and shar'd the Money amongst them, and gave *W*: half a Guinea for his dividend. In this Exploit our mighty Heroe *Neaves* was only a Spectator, whereby it seems he either wanted resolution for such a desperate Enterprize, or that he depended entirely on the Courage, Conduct, and Fidelity of his Companions; yet he wanted not a due Regard to his Interest, for tho' he was not immediately an actor in the Engagement, yet he took especial Care to have the Management of dividing the Booty, and securing to himself a good Dividend, and was afterwards so just to the Publick Community as to make himself an Evidence, and to hang his Accomplices for his further Benefit and Advantage.

Thomas Neaves, Thomas Crowder, Edward Benson, alias *Brown*, and a fourth Person, flush'd with the fumes of strong Waters, (for those sort of People generally intoxicate the Brain to make them hazardous and desperate in their Attempts) rambling about the Streets about two Nights afterwards, met and assaulted one Mr. *Hendery*; *Benson* knock'd him down, *Crowder* rifled his Pockets of a Snuff-box, a Pair of Spectacles, and an Almanack, whilst *Neaves* and the other Person clap'd each of them a loaded Pistol to his Ears; *Crowder's* Hat being bad, he step'd back and borrow'd

borrow'd Mr. *Hendery's* Hat, which was considerably better than his own.

Neaves in company with *Crowder* and *Gale*, alias *Kiddy George*, took a walk one Afternoon towards *Turnham-Green*, not with a Design to commit any illegal Actions, but to divert themselves, and hous'd at the King of *Bobemia*, where they drank plentifully, for it is a common Maxim with the *Priggs*, that (whenever they go abroad to gratify their Inclinations) they are no Niggards in their Expences. Towards the close of the Evening they resolv'd to come to Town, to that Intent they paid their Reckoning, which was pretty considerable, and courteously left the House.

Neaves declared that to his knowledge they had no design when they left the King of *Bobemia* to rob any body; but as they pass'd through *Piccadilly*, seeing a Man well dress'd walking alone before them, *Crowder* said, let us mill that Cull, for he appears to be of Substance; when immediately *Crowder* and *Neaves* stept on softly behind the Gentleman, struck at him with that Violence, that he had certainly fallen, had he not reel'd against the Wall of a House which supported him, till he drew his Sword and stood in his own Defence; upon which, they having no other Weapons for Offence, but the Sticks which they carry'd in their Hands, they left him with

£ G—d D—n him they should meet with him some other time, when they should be better provided for him.

Being baulk'd in their first Attempt, they held a Consultation wherein they resolv'd to go Home, without raising any necessary Contribution to defray the Expences of the Day to effect their premeditated Designs. They took a walk into the hundreds of *Drury*, where they spent some time in a Dialect with the frow Files (that is Women Pick-Pockets) they ask'd them how Trade went on, who answer'd them that they were in a starving Condition, not having any Cull for a Week past, that was worth their consideration, that they had often div'd and found Nitchels; this genuine, but lamentable Declaration, mov'd them to Commiserate their Condition and to offer them a Dram of *Man*, viz. *Geneva*, which they readily accepted, and then they parted. Then they took a Tour to *Holborn* Division, and meeting with nothing worth their while, that Street being pretty clear, they pass'd thro' *Brook's-Market* down to *Hatton-Garden*, when they met with an Adventure, they saw a Gentleman of Fashion walking seriously along, whom they resolv'd to Attack, *Crowder*, as if he had been Drunk, reel'd against him, the Gentleman turning his Head about

to know the meaning of his jostling him, *Neaves* and *Kiddy George* knock'd him down and robb'd him of a Watch, Money and other Things of a considerable Value; with which they made off undiscover'd, the Watch they sold to *Madam Toy*, and there divided equally the Spoil; after the Partition they seperated and went to their respective Lodgings to solace themselves, after the Toils and Fateigues of the Day.

About three Nights after they met together at their Rendevouse, where happening into the Company of *Benson*, alias *Brown*, it was resolv'd, *Nemine Contradicente*, to go in quest of some new Adventure, and therefore agreed to go towards *Islington*, because they did suppose they should meet with something worth their seeking; after *Neaves* having stated that there were several People, Men and Women of good Fashion that daily resorted to the Spaws and Musick-House, to see the Entertainment, and the Diversion of that Place, that he well as-sur'd there were several wealthy Citizens Wives, (out of a natural Propensity to the Game, at all Fours, or out of Necessity occasion'd by Inability of their Husbands, and the debility too often Incident to an advanc'd Age) that generally in a Disguise frequented those Places, and that

that as they usually stay'd, till betwixt the Hours of nine and ten before they broke up, they should find a very good Opportunity to make a good Market that should answer their Ends. Wherefore they walk'd for some time about the Basen at the Head of the New River, one of them being in continual Motion backwards and forwards, to watch an opportunity to begin the Attack, and give the rest the signal to advance. It was *Neaves's* turn to advance when he spy'd two Gentlemen, and two Ladies coming down the Hill, who having given the proper signal the rest mov'd forward, and having charg'd the Men with each a cock'd Pistol in his Hand, they demanded their Money without any demur, for that they had not time for long Preambles, which the Gentlemen readily comply'd with, but the Women having each of them a Diamond Ring on their Finger, beg'd very hard to be excus'd for that they could not conveniently part with their Moveables for fear their Husbands should discover the disaster when they came Home, and that the discovery might be of a fatal Consequence; their Spouses being for some time past grown Jealous of their Actions and their Intreigues, but their Arguments being of no Weight with those Adventurers they were necessitated (being affrighted by a large Volley of

of Oaths and Imprecations) to surrender at discretion : Here they got very considerably and return'd. *Neaves*, saying in a merry Mood, was not my Project good? did I not tell you we should meet with those Cits in our way; and producing the Diamond Rings, said Z—ns, the Damage is not great, we may as well have them as their Culls; for these Ladies stick at no Expence to gratifie their Inclinations, whilst their poor good natur'd Cuckolds are ransacking their Thoughts for worldly Interest, and little suspect what Game they have been playing at this Night to gratifie their Letchery.

On Sunday the 14th of April, *Neaves* went voluntarily before one of his Majesties Justices of the Peace for Southwark, and gave Information against Crowder, Gale, alias Kiddy George, and Benson, alias Brown, who were immediately apprehended and committed to Newgate, and he was sent to the Compter, in order to be an Evidence against them at the ensuing Sessions at the Old-Baily.

From the 14th of April, to the first of May following, *Neaves* was very Industrious and Active in apprehending and taking others of his Accomplices, and on the 18th of the same Month of April, he took one William Mansfield, who was tried on his Information but acquitted.

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At the Sessions at the *Old-Baily* which began *May* the first, *Neaves* appear'd in the Court to give his Evidence, upon which Evidence, *George Gale*, alias *Kiddy George*, *Edward Benson*, alias *Brown*, *Thomas Crowder*, alias *Little Tom*, *Richard Nichols*, *John Hornby* and *James Toon*, were convicted and receiv'd Sentence accordingly; and were all executed at *Tyburn*, on the 20th of the same Month.

At the Sessions which began the 17th of *July*, *Neaves* pleaded his Majesty's Pardon, and was discharg'd accordingly; and at the same Time mov'd the Court, that he might have 20*l.* allow'd him to defray his Expences down to *Kinston*, in order to be an Evidence against some Prisoners at the ensuing Assizes there; but was told by the Court that it was too exorbitant a Charge for so small a Journey.

When *Neaves* had pleaded to his Majesty's most gracious Pardon, and was discharg'd out of *Newgate*, he found his Condition very contemptible, Houses of any Credit would not entertain him, because they did not look upon him to be in a Capacity to pay for his Lodging, and those that harbour'd him before were loath to have any dealings with him, because a Puff (that is a Person that is an Evidence against his Associates, and is so term'd in their Language) is afterwards
look'd

look'd upon with a sort of Shyness and Indifference, because they dare not trust him, for fear he should Impeach them. So that his Company and Conversation was shun'd by all that knew him, for which reason he was oblig'd to seek out for fresh Quarters; wherefore he took a Lodging at the House of a slender Acquaintance in *Essex-Street, White-Fryers*, that had an imperfect Knowledge of his course of Life, where he continued sometime without attempting any Thing, but some petty Larcenary, *viz.* Clouting, (that is picking Pockets of Handkerchiefs) &c. to pay for his Lodging, and get him Victuals to support the necessities of Life.

But finding that way of Living was only half starving himself he resolv'd on a new Employment, which was to apprehend Felons, or those that were noted for that course of Life, from whom he us'd to extort Money, and then set them at Liberty; he had an Idea that *Jonathan Wild* had got considerably by that Business, had the Freedom of appearing before his Majesty's Justices of the Peace upon all Occasions, where they had a regard to his sayings, was indulg'd by the Courts of Judicature at all Sessions and Assizes, and was always rated a Principal in the dividend of the Price of the Blood of those unhappy Wretches that fell under the censure of the Law.

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Upon these views he became a Proficient by his Practice in this new Occupation, and was grown a Terror to the Fraternity, for if he happen'd at any Time into their conversation, if they did but mutter, or any ways disoblige him, either by refusing to pay his Reckoning, or feeding his Avarice, he would immediately step to a Justice of the Peace, and having given some formal Account of a Robbery, sometime, or other committed he generally procur'd a Warrant, which he carry'd along with him, till he had an Opportunity of securing them, if they came down the Cole, that is if they gave him Money all was well, but if not they were certainly charg'd in Custody, and sent to Prison on suspicion till he could (as he often pretended) find an Adversary to prosecute them.

He was once passing along *Drury-Lane*, where being met by a Daughter of one *Hester Moor*, who was formerly a Mistress to *Crowder*, executed at *Tyburn*, on *Neaves's* Information, she charg'd him with his perfidy in swearing falsely against her Husband, as she term'd him, and gave him invective and opprobrious Language, which his Honour could not suffer, being not accusom'd to such an Indignity, he procur'd a Warrant from a Justice of the Peace, and would have had the Creature committed for the

the Affront, had she not consented to ask his Pardon, and defray all Expences, which by all Standers-by, were thought very exorbitant, yet she was oblig'd for her Freedom, to agree to his unreasonable Demands.

These Exactions and Extortions were but of little use to him, for as the *English Proverb says*, *what is got over the Devils Back goes under his Belly*; he generally lost at Gaming, what he extorted from those unhappy People, so that he was always Indigent and Poor, which was the reason that he now lyes under Sentence of Condemnation, for if report be true, he lost his Cloaths off his Back at Cards, that very Night that he robb'd Mr. *Lawrance*, the Particulars of which I shall relate in a proper Place, when I come to treat at large concerning that Felony.

Tho' his Gains were considerable and might have supported him decently and handsomely, without attempting any Thing that was Ill-got, he had a continual hankering after his former Profession, and therefore resolv'd on the following Enterprize. He went to a certain Mercer's Shop (whose Name and Abode, I forbear to mention, because the Felony was compounded, tho' the Mercer does not deserve any Indulgence for screening so great a Villany) in order as he pretended to buy his Wife a Gown

and Petticoat, and appearing in the Habit of a Countryman, with a great Coat and Boots, he did not suspect him till after he hik'd away, that is, got clear with a Piece of Silk of considerable value, having honestly paid for a Quantity sufficient for a compleat Sute for his Wife. Some time after, the Mercer accidentally met him in the Street, secured him, and had him committed; but upon his returning the Silk, and handsomely rewarding the Adversary for his Charge and Labour; he had a favourable Bill of Indictment preferr'd against him at *Hicks's-Hall*, which being return'd *ignoramus*, he was discharg'd.

I happen'd one Night into the Company of one *Elizabeth Scot*, who by her Discourse seem'd to be intimately acquainted with this same *Neaves*, for she produc'd a Letter that she had from him whilst he remain'd in *Newgate*, charg'd with the above-mention'd Fact, which take as follows, for I had it deliver'd to me at the Charge of a Pint or two of Wine.

Dear Betty,

I Am now in the Checquer-Inn in Newgate-Street, from whence I never expect to escape till I go to the Gibbing-block, without the Assistance of my Friends, for the Cull has rap'd it hard against me: I have no remedy left but to pay back the Goods which

which are not in my Custody. I desire therefore (if you have that Friendship for me which you have hitherto profess'd) that you would go to Madam T--y, and desire her not to part with the Silk, for my Life depends on her Goodness. If I live I may make her a suitable return; but if the D---n Bitch the Fence will not pay them back, I will send her Adversaries enough that shall do her Business, and hike her over the Herring-Pond. Pray come forthwith to me, and I will give you further Instructions; if you can conveniently bring me some Money to see the Keepers to put me on a lighter Pair of Bazills, for I am heavily loaded with Darbys, I shall be oblig'd to you. I beg you will not fail coming, which is the Request of you.

Unfortunate, yet

affectionate Friend,

THO. NEAVES.

The Frow confess'd she went to him, and by his Directions went to the Mercer; and having at that time the happiness of shedding a few Crocodile Tears, she prevail'd on

on the good natur'd Man to make up the Matter, having first come down the Charges he was at, and promis'd to defray the Expences of preferring a Bill. I ask'd her if he had not a bit of that Same into the Bargain, which she frankly own'd with this addition, that she believ'd the power of her — effectually wrought more on the Mercer's Inclinations than all *Neaves's* advantageous Offers could have done, for she said he seem'd transported when she agreed to his request, having taken her for a Piece of Modesty, because she look'd demurely, and pass'd for his Sister.

He confess'd to me that nothing troubled his Conscience more than his biteing the Frow Files Women, that have a particular Friend which they call their Taste, and seldom desire to stay any longer in any Gentleman's Company then till they have an Opportunity to bite him of his Cole or Scout, *viz.* pick his Pockets of his Money or his Watch; that they did not walk the Streets purely out of any lecherous Inclination, or a natural Propensity to that loose, idle, and profligate Life, but with the design of getting themselves flush Toggys, that is, gay Cloaths, and to maintain their Friend like a Man, for which they often run the risque of their Hoes, and hazard the Noose at the Gibbing-block.

But

But as for those Buttocking Frows, that for a Lie buxum, a Hog, or half a Slat, this is sixpence, a Shilling, or half a Crown, shall turn up their Scut to every Porter, Link-boy, Tinker, or Carman; he look'd upon them to be a common Nufance to Society, and that they ought to be treated as such; neither did he think it any Sin to strip them to their Skin, because they were a penurious, hungry, self-interested Crew.

The way that he us'd to bite the Women, or play at Hawl Cloy, was this, two, three, or four of them generally went in a Gang together, and whenever they met a Woman that they had Design upon, one of them would step to kiss her, and under the pretence of feeling her pretty Bubbles would thrust his Hand down her Bosom, whilst the Woman was struggling to take away his Hand, another of the Tribe would cut off her Pocket. This they term'd Hawl Cloy, so they seldom or never miss'd of a Booty. This Narrative may be of Service to the Publick, for whenever a Woman finds them upon this Game, she may assure herself they have a Design to rob her, and that their Address is not out of any Regard for her Person, or Aspect, but purely for their own Advantage and Interest; and tho' they seldom or never happen to be bon'd, *viz.* taken, yet

yet the Act in its nature is of as dangerous a Consequence as any other Part of their Profession; for an Indictment lies for Assaulting a Person on the Highway, putting her in Bodily Fear, and Robbing her, which is Death by the Law.

Neaves told me that he once took a Walk to *Hampstead*, and in his Return to Town met with a Country Girl that was coming to seek for Service; he fell into Discourse with her, and having by his Importunity prevail'd on her to drink part of a Pint, he discover'd her Intention; he pretended to help her into a good Place; you may believe she was very glad to accept of the Offer, and thanked him for his Civility. From this House they adjourn'd to another, where they drank hot Pints, Geneva and Ale, till it grew late, and the Liquor began to work; he then told her, that in consideration she was a Stranger, he would take care to provide for her a Lodging, which she readily accepted: Then he carry'd her to a House where he was intimately acquainted, and having drank her to that pitch, (she not being us'd to drinking) that she had not that guard for her Wellfare and Security which she otherwise might have had. He undress'd her and put her to Bed, what he did afterwards Decency forbids me to mention; but it may be suppos'd when awak'd in the Morning, she was fur-

surpriz'd to find herself in a strange Place ; but her Consternation must certainly be great when she found herself strip'd of all she had in the World, and that the Man that pretended so much Friendship to her the Day before, had ruin'd her to all Intents and Purposes. The Woman of the House lent her (as she pretended) in Compassion, an old tatter'd Gown, which she accepted, and quietly walk'd away, lamenting those miserable Circumstances which she had inadvertently brought upon herself.

Neaves going one Night thro' Leicester-Fields, he met a young Woman, whom at first he took for a piece of Modesty, and accordingly took her round the Waste, with the usual Complement of my Dear, how do you do, which way are you going, &c. but his main Design was to ease her of some part of her Burden, when Time and Opportunity serv'd ; but here our Hero caught a Tartar, for the quere B——h was a knowing one, she cry'd out for help, and had him secur'd, and would have rap'd it hard against him, that is, she would have sworn that he robb'd her of one Guinea in Gold, and seventeen Shillings in Silver, had not he rais'd the Crop, and gave it her, to satisfy her Clamours. Here the Biter was bit.

Being vex'd at his ill Usage; he swore he would be reveng'd on some one, or other, before he went Home, to make good his loss; accordingly he trudges about the Streets, till he happen'd into *Lincoln's-Inn-Fields*, and overtook a Woman with a Band-box under her Arm, whom he knock'd down, and made off with the Booty: In the Box he found very rich *Flanders* lac'd Head-cloaths and Ruffles, which he dispos'd of to a Lock for five Guineas, and then went contentedly Home to his Doxy.

He confess'd he liv'd very reserv'd for some time, without attempting any Thing that was ill, for that he never car'd to turn out, till Necessity forc'd him to it; wherefore when Stock begun to run low, *Neaves* associated himself with Three, whom he would on no Account Name, and about 11 of the Clock at Night, they met a Man and his Wife, in *Tavestock-Street*, going lovingly along, whom they resolv'd when Opportunity serv'd, to Attack, which they accordingly did, near the pav'd Court that turns up into *Covent-Garden*, by tripping up his Heels, upon which the Woman cry'd out Murder; to prevent her outcry, *Neaves* took a handful of Dirt, and threw it directly into her Mouth; whilst she was busy'd in cleansing her Mouth, they robb'd the Man of his Scout, his Lob, and his Cole,

that

that is his Watch, Snuff-Box, with about seven Pound in Gold and Silver, then cut the Woman's Pocket, and made off, leaving them to recover themselves out of their Surprize, and mourn their unhappy Fate.

Being ask'd whether he had Correspondence with those detestable Set of People call'd *Molly's*, or *Sodomites*; *Neaves* reply'd, that he never frequented any of their Abominable Houses of Call, except *Jenny Greensleeves* his Nursery in *Durham-Tard*, whether they us'd to resort, there he saw several comical Adventures, such as Lyings-In. When a Man was formally laid in Bed, with the usual Ceremonies and Formalities, the Midwife, which they call'd Mrs. *Susanna*, attended; the Wretch had his intermitting Pains, would make wry Faces, sometimes Squawl out, and desire some of them to hold her Back, for her Pains were grinding and severe, sometimes by Intervals smile, sometimes cry out, but at last the Mount's in Labour, and out jumps a Mouse; the Lady is deliver'd of a jointed Baby, the Clouts are warm'd, she is bound up and put to Bed, then the Child is handed about, where the Gossips views him, and pass their Verdict on him: O, it is a fine Child, it has Daddy's Eyes, Daddy's Nose and Chin; I warrant you, the Father is a good Work-

man, and the Mother a good Breeder, it does not look as if it was starv'd in the Womb. Madam, is her Cradle provided, and the Gossips Bread, Cheese, and a Cup of good nappy Ale, when they Chat, Drink and are Merry.

In other Rooms, there are your Barking Culls, there is a Fowl provided, which Mrs. Margery eats, whilst a Man lyes under the Table imitating a Dog, and gnawing the Bones, which Mrs. Margery throws under the Table, thus do these sort of Vermin vent their Letchery

In other Rooms there are others, which they call Shitten Culls, they lye flat on their Back, with their Mouths open, whilst buxom Nan turns up her S—t and Sh—ts in his Mouth, which he licks in as Cordially, and with as good an Appetite, as a Scotchman does his Brewis, or a Sailor his Lob's-Couse; and if it happens that a Bit falls on either side, he eats it up as greedily, as a Hog does the draught out of the Trough.

Neaves own'd that one Night, he was singled out, and pick'd up in the Piazza, in Covent-Garden, by an elderly Man, that could not be less than Sixty Years of Age, a Carpenter, near Tyburn Road, and went with him into a House in Parker's Lane, Neaves making him believe it was a House for their Purpose, but

I forgot to mention, that *Neaves* betwixt *Covent-Garden*, and *Parker's-Lane*, got a very handsome large Silver Snuff-Box out of him; as soon as *Neaves* enter'd the House, he tip'd the Landlord the wink to carry on the Jest, and call'd for Liquor, the old Gentleman had a good Diamond Ring on his Finger, which *Neaves* ey'd, and had a design upon it, he prais'd it, and desir'd him to let him try it on his Finger, which request the old Cull comply'd with, then *Neaves* enquir'd of the Landlord, whether he could not provide a Bed for him and his Spouse, which being answer'd in the Affirmative, he ask'd the Price, and was answer'd a Crown, which the old Man thought too exorbitant, and ask'd several Times, what the B——s (the Man's Wife and Maid) did below, and why they did not go to Bed; the Women seemingly consented, and retir'd to a Place on the Stairs, where they espy'd all the filthy and comical Passages; the Cull felt *Neaves* by the Hand, and said he had a pure soft Palm: Whether the old Man did not like his Companions being reserv'd, or whether he suspected the Sincerity of the House, is a Secret, but he seem'd very uneasie for his Ring, which *Neaves* with a great deal of Perswasion return'd, and designedly quarrelling with him, took his Cane and broke
his

his Head, then went off with the Snuff-Box, and left the Spark to pay the reckoning, for which he was oblig'd to pawn his Ring. The next Day, he brought *Jenny Greensleeves* with him, that is the Man of the House where they resorted, and sent for *Neaves*, who came immediately, when the Cull demanded the Box, but was answer'd he made him a Present of it, to do so, and so, then raising a dispute about the reckoning, the Landlady wheedl'd him according to his Merit, and turn'd him out of Doors.

This is all the Account of the *Mollies* and *Sodomites*, that I could get out of him, the reason that he assign'd was, that he would not have the World believe, that he had any intimacy with them, and that whenever he happen'd into their Company, he look'd upon them with Horror and Indignation, that he conceiv'd their Profligate and wicked course of Life, had a resemblance more of Beasts, than of rational Animals.

But as his Life was intermix'd, with variety of Adventures, he declar'd that some time before he was taken, he took his Rambles one Night, with a design to apprehend loose, idle and disorderly Persons; but happening into the Company of some young Fellows, (whom at first sight, he took to be honest Pot Compani-
ons)

ons) he drank so plentifully, that he became very Drunk; the Sparks finding by some unguarded Expressions, of what Profession he was, were very fond of his Company, and having drank him to a very high Pitch, prevail'd on him to go with them, on an Enterprize to *Spittle-fields*, where they had laid such a Scheme, that would inevitably answer their Expectations; accordingly they went, and by the help of a Female Advocate, (who sat up late that Night on purpose) they had the Opportunity of rifling the House of Bales of wrought Silk to a considerable Value, having taken a Pin out of the Cellar-Window, taken up an Iron-Bar, that lay over the Casement, and cut a hole in the Shutter, to prevent a Scrutiny into the Maid's Honesty; and to make the Master and his Family, suppose the Fact was committed without her Knowledge, Privity, or Consent. Being ask'd who the Persons were, and to whom the said Goods were Sold, he desir'd to be excus'd, because (as his Fate was certain) he did not design to make any Discovery, that might prejudice other People, when he could not expect any Advantage by it, and that he believ'd, that the Goods were already dispos'd of, and could not be recovered again, (that as he had been already a Puff) and had thereby procur'd himself many Enemies, he was

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resolv'd now to be Silent, seeing any Declaration could be of no Benefit, or Advantage to the Publick, because as he lay under Sentence of Condemnation, his Evidence was of no effect, neither could there be any legal Prosecution grounded on his Confession, nor could the Parties be convicted on his Information.

On the sixth of *December* last, *Thomas Neaves* happen'd to Game, and whether the Man palm'd the Cards on him, or whether it happen'd to be his ill Fate, to have a run of Cards against him, is the query; but he lost all his Money, and even his Cloaths, yet the Man was so generous, that he left him his Cloaths to wear till he went Home to Shift himself, as he pretended. But instead of going Home he walk'd to *Monmouth-Street*, to buy him a Dimity Wastecoat, but not agreeing in the Price, *Neaves* D—n'd Mr. *Lawrence*, the Owner of the Wastecoat, and immediately snatch'd a Duroy Coat, upon which Mr. *Lawrence* jump'd of the Shop-board without Shoes, and pursued him, Crying out *Stop Thief*, and was follow'd by several Persons who run after him. He turn'd down *King's-Street*, *St. Giles's*, and passing by a Bricklayer's Labourer he dropt the Coat, the Hue and Cry, being at his Heels, at last

last he was stop'd at the Bottom of the said Street by a young Man, upon which he demanded the reason of being stop'd; he was reply'd, *there was a Cry of Stop Thief*, and that seeing no other Person run besides himself, he stop'd him; when the Bricklayers Labourer came up, and having view'd him, he aver'd he was the Person that drop'd the Coat, upon which he was secur'd, and carry'd before Mr. Justice Gifford, in great St. *Andrew's-Street*, by Mr. *Hastings*, Headborough in the same Street, by whom he was committed to *Newgate*; he offer'd then to make himself an Evidence, which was denied him, upon the Account that he was so lately admitted, and that the Indulgence granted him, was not a Warning to deter him, from such evil and pernicious Practices.

On the 16th Day of *January* last he was (amongst other Felons) arraign'd, for privately stealing out of the House of *Charles Lawrence* a Coat, to which Indictment he pleaded not Guilty; in the Afternoon his Tryal came on, and the Evidence being very full, and plain, he was found Guilty, and receiv'd Sentence of Death accordingly; he did not seem daunted in the least, when the Court pronounc'd, that he should be carry'd back to the Place from whence he came, and from thence convey'd to

the Place of Execution, where he was to Hang by the Neck till he was Dead; the Court made an Elegant, learn'd, and pathetick Oration, on the heinousness of each particular Offence, of which they stood convicted; and recommended them, (that as their Time in this Transitory Life was not of a long Continuance, a Day being shortly to be assign'd, when they must suffer a Scandalous and Ignominious Death) to prepare themselves by a due and regular Behaviour, for another World.

After his Conviction, he writ the following Letter, to his disconsolate Father, who was in the utmost Consternation and Confusion, on that melancholly Account.

Newgate, January the 28th.

Honour'd Father,

I*t is with concern that I acquaint you, that I am now condemn'd to dye; I wish I had follow'd your good Advice, when with Tears in your Eyes, you often desir'd me to leave of this wicked course of Life; but alas, what signified your Fatherly Care, I was grown harden'd in Iniquity, and would not listen to your Admonition, because*
the

the Grace of God was not before my Eyes. I have no hopes now of saving my Life, (for as I was once admitted an Evidence, and by my Information had convicted several bright young Fellows, who are now launch'd into Eternity) and could not take Warning by the Indulgence of the Government; I am confident they can have no regard for my wellfare, so that my Fate is certain. It was a great concern to me, when the Jury brought in their Verdict, that one Hughes should swear it was a joyful Day to him, and that he would take care to have my Carcass for a Skeleton: I cannot say but his resentment was just, because I endeavour'd to take away his Life, when I convicted Nichols, Benson, Crowder, Toon, and Kiddy George, and Others, some of whom declar'd their Innocence of the Facts, that they were charg'd with, their Dying Speeches may have this effect on a credulous World, that they may think me perjur'd, and for that reason may have an Aversion towards me; yet this Comfort I have, tho' they denied the Facts in their Indictments, for which they dy'd, they confess'd they had committed several Facts, that merited the Censure of the Law. Wherefore most dear and honour'd Father, I most humbly desire, that you would raise a Posse Comitatus of all my Friends and Acquaintance, particularly the Fraternity of Marrow-Bones and Cleavers, to

rescue my dead Body out of the Hands of the merciless Chirurgeons, who have a design on me, because they say I have a fine fair Skin. I confess you gave me a generous and liberal Education, had I improv'd it in an honest Way; but alas, why do I repeat past Transactions, they only aggravate my Guilt. I beg that you will pray for me, that when I cease to be, I may a remission of my Sins; my hopes are center'd in the Mercies of my sweet Redeemer, my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who by his voluntary Death on the Cross, has sufficiently made an Attonement for the Sins of Mankind. I forgive from my Heart, all those that have been Instrumental in my Death. I ask Pardon from those whom I have any ways injur'd, in my wicked and unaccountable course of Life, and I dye in perfect Charity with all the World, which is all at present from

Your

Unfortunate Son,

THOMAS NEAVES.

Dated from one of
the Cells in Newgate.

Im-

Immediately after his Father's Letter, he took Pen, Ink and Paper, and writ the following Epistle to his Wife, who disliking his Ways left him, and had marry'd another.

My Dear Betty,

I Beg that your Goodness will pardon my Presumption, it is the last Time that I shall be troublesome to you, the Time draws near, when I shall receive the just reward for my Transgressions; the dead Warrant is come down, and I am one of the Number, that the King and Council have destin'd for Execution on Friday next; had I follow'd your Advice, after I escaped so unexpectedly, and so fortunately, when the Mercer compounded with me, I had now been out of Danger, nor need I have fear'd the sailing up Holborn-Hill, splitting on the Rocks of sweet St. Giles's, and being cast away at Tyburn. But surely there is a certain Fate hangs over my Head, so that it was impossible for me to avoid this scandalous Death. Ah! now I repent when it is too late, that I have been so Profligate a Wretch all my Days; that I can neither hope, or expect a Reprieve. I confess you have made a better choice in your late Match, than you could have expected in me; therefore from my Heart, I wish you all the Content and Happiness, this frail and transitory World can afford: Pray
my

my Dear, make what Interest you can to save me from the Chirurgeons, for I have a great many bitter Enemies, that are enrag'd against me to the last Degree; I mean the Friends and Relations of those unfortunate Men, that I convicted by my Evidence. Remember the dying request, of your once Affectionate and Tender Husband,

THO. NEAVES.

POSTSCRIPT.

I Would not have you think, when I quitted your Company and marry'd another, that I had a greater regard for her Person, than I had for yours, I declare to the contrary, and I think the Words of a dying Man, ought to be depended on; the reason was, because my corrupt Nature was prone to Wickedness, and that she always commended in me, what you in your Conjugal Affection still reprov'd, and had an Aversion against.

Farewell my Life.



T. N.

F. I. N. I. S.

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